



Bruce Elfant, Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector and Voter Registrar

News Release

Communications Division

5501 Airport Blvd • 4705 Heflin Ln • 15822 Foothill Farms Loop • 4011 McKinney Falls Pkwy • 8656 Hwy 71

Media Inquiries: Tiffany Seward | 512-854-9706 | tiffany.seward@traviscountytexas.gov

Public Inquiries: Travis County Tax Office | 512-854-9473 | TaxOffice@traviscountytexas.gov | www.TravisCountyTax.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Elfant thanks TxDMV Board for listening to concerns about adverse impact agency plan will have on taxpayers

AUSTIN - Bruce Elfant, the Travis County tax assessor-collector, said Friday he is hopeful Texas Department of Motor Vehicles Board members will consider changes to an agency-proposed plan that, if passed by the board, would cost Travis County taxpayers more than \$4 million.

"I testified before the TxDMV Board on Thursday, and I want to express my appreciation to the board members and Chair Laura Ryan, who listened intently, asked good questions and appeared genuinely interested in how the agency plan would adversely impact taxpayers and small businesses," Elfant said.

Other tax assessor-collectors also testified and Cathy Talcott, the Comal County tax assessor-collector who sits on the board of the state's Tax Assessor-Collectors Association, testified the group has serious concerns about the TxDMV plan. The association is comprised of the state's 254 tax assessor-collectors.

The plan's biggest impact is on the state's larger counties, and Elfant praised the Tax Assessor-Collectors Association Board for its support and TxDMV Board Member Luanne Caraway, the Hays County tax assessor-collector, who voted against moving the plan forward.

Elfant also was pleased to hear TxDMV board members say the plan's intention is not to close down local title service businesses that provide vehicle registration and titling services.

"It was a relief to hear board members say the plan, which sets to regulate what these private businesses can charge for providing these services, is not intended to target these locally-owned, small businesses for closure by setting such a low cap on what they can charge it would drive them out of business," Elfant said. "There also seems to be an ongoing question about whether it is legal for a state agency to interfere with private business that way."

The TxDMV Board voted 7 to 1 to move the plan to the next step, which will allow the public to comment. Key measures include raising the vehicle registration fee by \$4 for those who come in person to the tax office or mail in their renewals; reducing the county's compensation from \$2.90 to 25 cents for online renewals; and capping title services charges.

The plan is expected to be posted for public comment later this month. You may view the TxDMV plan at <http://www.txdmv.gov/about-us/txdmv-board-meetings>. Click the "Amended Presentation" button under the April 7, 2016 TxDMV Board posting. The TxDMV also will post a video of the board meeting in the same website location. If you want to weigh in now you may do so by emailing your comments to TaxOffice@TravisCountyTX.gov, please put "TxDMV Plan" in your subject line, or you may pick up a comment sheet at the main tax office, 5501 Airport Blvd.

"We're not against changes in the way we do business," Elfant said. "But I and many of my fellow tax assessor-collectors will always speak up when even a well-intentioned plan is going to hurt our taxpayers and small businesses."

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